

Western Field Ornithologists and the Sonoran Joint Venture Field Expedition to the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui

June 27-July 3, 2010 -- [\[click to view additional photos taken by Dave Krueper\]](#)

Compiled by Carol Beardmore, John Arnett and Dave Krueper



APFF Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui after the summer rains

Photo courtesy of Claudia N. Moreno Arzate

The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) and the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) jointly coordinated a bird monitoring expedition to the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve in southern Sonora, Mexico, from June 27-July 3, 2010. The objective of this expedition was to use the collective expertise of WFO members and SJV participants to collect and record natural history information and baseline monitoring data on birds of conservation interest in the APFF. These data will be used by the Reserve staff to manage habitat for the birds of conservation interest.

The elevation of the APFF ranges from 1,200 feet to almost 5,000 feet. There is an extensive Tropical Deciduous Forest community and riparian area in the lower parts as well as a pine-oak forest community at the higher elevations. Even though the area around

Alamos has been birded for many years, there is no *quantitative* breeding season data of which we are aware. We were invited by the APFF to collect data on breeding and habitat relationships of the bird species found there, to photograph species and document nesting, and obtain vocalization recordings.

This was not a guided birding trip. This was a true biological data collecting expedition. We met in Alamos on Sunday, June 27 early in the morning and had a 5 hour orientation and training session to familiarize participants with the logistics, APFF, safety, and monitoring methodologies to be used. We used vehicles to transport participants, our gear and food to three base camps, and then hiked daily to survey locations within several kilometers of the base camps. The base camps were remote and primitive. Finding our survey plots required considerable GPS skill and a fair amount of bush-whacking through dense, thorny vegetation. It was very hot (one camp recorded 120°F) and quite humid. We didn't get a taste of summer rains until our last night in Alamos.



Elegant Euphonia *Euphonia elegantissima* male near
nest 1 July 2010

Photo courtesy of Thomas Archdeacon



Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*
30 June 2010

Photo courtesy of "Flaco" Gonzalez

Each participant was responsible for paying for and arranging their own transportation to and from Alamos, Sonora, as well as their lodging and expenses while in Alamos. Each participant volunteered for specific research activities and brought their own necessary field equipment to accomplish their assignments.

We conducted 59 area search plots with double sampling, took vegetation measurements at 118 points, conducted several nightjar surveys, wrote up over 25 nest record cards, and obtained hundreds of photos and sound recordings to document the avian diversity of the area. Notable was the discovery of the third nesting of Grayish Saltator within Sonora right within the town limits, and quite exciting was the discovery of the first nesting of Elegant Euphonia for the state of Sonora.

The data will be compiled, analyzed and published with our Mexican partners and participants as co-authors, and all publications and data will be shared with the Reserve. We will also be presenting the results of our data-gathering expedition at the October 2010 WFO Annual Meeting in Palm Desert, California. Our ultimate goal is to analyze and publish the results of the data collection in the Western Field Ornithologists' journal, *Western Birds*.



Data compilation in the afternoon

Photos courtesy Tim Burr



Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*
30 June 2010



Elegant Trogon *Trogon elegans*
29 June 2010

Photos courtesy of "Flaco" Gonzalez



Spotted Wren *Campylorhynchus gularis*
30 June 2010



Rusty Sparrow *Aimophila rufescens*
30 June 2010

Photos courtesy of Dave Krueper



Alamos Bio-Blitz Participants
Photo courtesy of Bob Evans



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Photo courtesy of Bob Evans



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